

Pronghorn: No Doe Tags This Season

The latest data is in, and it doesn't bode well for hunters hoping for a pronghorn antelope tag. The pronghorn population is down slightly from last year, prompting wildlife officials to play it safe by cutting tag allotments.

The DFG's northeastern California winter census counted 4,330 pronghorn, a decline from the previous year and the third consecutive year below 5,000 animals.

As a result, the DFG has proposed cutting the allotment of buck tags and eliminating doe tags for the 2000 hunting season. This year, 220 buck tags will be sold, compared to 350 buck and 100 doe tags for the 1999 season.

In 1992, the state's pronghorn antelope population was the highest it had been in more than a century with nearly 8,000 animals. The population took a nosedive during the harsh 1992-93 winter and has yet to recover to its 1991 high.

According to Jon Fischer, a DFG wildlife biologist and statewide pronghorn antelope program coordinator, "Since the '92-'93 winter, pronghorn populations have not recovered to the extent the DFG had expected. The recent survey gives cause for concern, but not alarm."

Researchers are still optimistic for the long-term recovery of the state's pronghorn. In the meantime, what is the treatment prescribed by wildlife managers? "Less hunting pressure," says Fischer, "and more patience." 🦌